THE FAMILIAR LETTERS OF THOMAS LOV-ELL BEDDOES.

THE LETTERS OF THOMAS LOVELL BED-DOES. Edited with Notes. By Edmund Gosse, Hon. M. A. of Trinity College, Cambridge. Pp. iv. 25. Macmillan & Co.

truly critical temperament is that its hardest he perhaps retained it longer than others did. blows and its sharpest weapons are reserved for There was, indeed, one department of criticism its unhappy possessor. He is like the rusty sword of Hudibras, that are into itself for lack of retained his love for the old English dramatists something else to hew and back. If the work | through all the vicissitudes of his own career, of others meets only now and then his grudging and the German writer whom he most admired. praise, how much worse is it with his own writ- Tieck, attracted him mainly by profound and yet ings, over which he drudges with endless dis- delicate study of Shakespeare. As time went on satisfaction? He has a thought of perfection which he became more German than English. He behe can never realize, and, as he tolls on sentence | came revolutionary in a sense, and lost friendby sentence, his critical self seems at times like ships in England which he prized, but which another person scanning the written page, line he relinquished with pretended indifference. by line, marking here and there the defects, and | Critical distrust reacted on the whole circumferconstantly reiterating: "Now, can't you see why | ence of the man's social relations, as well as on you fail? Your nature is lacking at this point his own mental condition at the centre. It is and this point. You haven't formed a thorough possible to imagine that his letters were someidea of your own fowers. That is the reason times irritating to others from causes over which why you are always touching matters that are he had really no control. They should have been beyond your grasp." As in Hamlet, the prince | read as soliloquies, of critics, so in all his followers, effort is all - Truly the fittest place for this book is beside but palsied by haunting doubt. There never Amiel's "Journal." Beddoes is not so refined was a better example of this defect than Thomas as Amiel. He gratifies a spirit of coarseness Lovell Beddoes. The very fact that he had an occasionally. But he is as penetrating a critic early success seemed to frighten him ever after- as the Genevan professor, he is as inconsistent tragedy of "Death's Jest Book" it would be opinions, he has the same vague philosophy of for later generations. It keeps his name before ward. How long he worked over his posthumous and inconsequent in the expression hard to tell, certainly more than a score of years, life. In the case of both the German Uni- the minds of the comparatively few who medwith long intervals of hopeless meditation; and versity seems to have been a fatal resort. From yet when the end came he was no better satis- the outset hope seems to have had little part in the influences which erase all names but one or fied than he was with his first draft of it. He life of either. The reader feels the tragedy in two in a century from that icy monument which strips himself mentally of one power after an- these letters before he comes to it, and he is not Chaucer described. Mrs. Plunkett herself raises other, until at last, in sheer helplessness, he ex- even shocked by the blunt cynicism of the last claims in one of his letters to his steadfast friend, words: "I am food for what I am good for-Thomas Forbes Kelsall: "I do not know whether worms. . . . I ought to have been, among I have written to you about song-writing. It is other things, a good poet. Life was too great a that the authors even of one hundred years ago Gettysburg in "Between the Lines." attained a decided and clear critical theory." had lost a leg some time before by a fall from a the thought that the literature of an age goes He dilates upon the theme with the interest of horse, and he now sought relief from the annoyone who had just come upon a novelty. He ances of life in poison. Mr. Gosse has published individuals. It is not hard to believe that to the notes how difficult it is "to write a song with | the letters as they were written. To adapt them | last moment of his posthumous renown the reaease, tenderness, and that ethereal grace which to the only purpose which they can well serve sons of Dr. Holland's influence among the people you find" among the old dramatists-Shakespeare. time it was this very matter of song-writing polished form, such as the author himself might is shown by the testimony of this be ing to Procter (Barry Cornwall) that he would The reader who feels surprise at the long delay write more songs, if he could, but adding: "I dom get a glimpse of the right sort of idea in the "Poetical Works of Beddoes," published three right light for a song; and eleven out of the or four years ago. dozen are always good for nothing." He excused his delay with the revision of a work already practically completed by accusing himself of idleness and carelessness, which were due to a shrewd suspicion that he had "no real poetical call." At another time he convinced himself, as he wrote to Kelsall, that he was essentially unpoetic in character, habits and ways of thinking. The mere fact that he could not make up his mind was on occasion adequate proof that he was without fitness for the task he had undertaken. If he had possessed the conviction that he could by any means become an important dramatic writer, then, of course, it would have been impossible for him to swerve from that path to reputation. Now he finds that he has put in too many songs, "and two of them are bad, somewhat Moorish and sentimental"; and again he thinks of remodelling the whole structure of the play, whereupon his resolution evaporates in a clever essay upon the proper way in which a drama should be constructed. Then he confesses that he has really begun a little to after "the Ill-fated play in question." He inquires what his correspondent would say to a drinking-song at the end of the second act, and he is about to copy it with a depreciatory comment, but suddenly hesitates. "On second thoughts," he exclaims, "I will not bore you with it. Indeed, it is utterly useless to send you anything, for you always forget to criticise and abuse properly, which it is the duty of every friend to do, as long as the confided piece remains in manuscript." If his friend had been duly critical he would have seen how stupid and superfluous almost all the second act is, how common-

place the second bridal song in the fourth act. his absence in Germany being, of course, the excuse for the request. He honestly thinks that he flaws are which his friends will pick. some wretched comic part in it," he tells Kelsall, "which I cannot improve nor give up." The conversation might be improved, he imagines. them." But another time he will do better-that is, if people pay any attention to this piece and make it worth his while to write again. If the proposed publication excites no notice he will conclude that he is no writer for the time and generation. The play is too long; the first act is a reminiscence of his own carrier work, the second is dull and undramatic, but the others are better, though there is weakness in the second scene and the beginning of the third scene of the fourth act. Thus he endeavors to forestall the criticism which he has invited. But he finds that he has not divined the objections which Procter makes to the drama, and he soon asks to have specified the scenes and larger passages which should be erased; for he is not sure that he catches the meaning of his mentor's criticism. "Of the three classes of defects which you mention," he writes, "obscurity, conceits, and mysticism-I am afraid I am blind to the first and last, as I may be supposed to have associated a certain train of ideas to a certain mode of expressing them, and my four German years may have a little impaired my English style; and to the second I am, alas, a little partial, for Cowley was the first po writer whom I learned to understand." That is to say, in plain words, the censure does not meet his views at all; and yet he wants more of it, for he goes on to specify the places which he thinks his friend would point out for rewriting. He thinks Kelsall is right about the disagreeable elements in the persons of the drama; but he cannot help their being monotonous, for humor and the power of depicting character, "two things | ster Abbey, in the picturesque relations of his absolutely indispensable for a good dramatist, are the two first articles in my deficiencies." Then comes a period of silence and perhaps disgust, and has not the slightest inclination to take any further trouble in the matter. After another interval he has some thoughts of raising the ghost, and again, years later, he gets back the manuscript and compares his feelings to those of the Creator gazing on the first sketches of living creatures. "It is strange enough," he adds, "to see the fossilized faces of one's forgotten literary creatures years after the vein of feeling in which they were formed has remained closed and unexplored." The upshot of it all is that the author never does make up his mind to anything until finally he takes that sudden and tragical venture into the other world for no acknowledged reason had become a bore.

the case of Beddoes. But it was displayed from the outset in his criticism. There is no question but that the analysis of literature should have been his task in life rather than creative work. Yet there is no persistence in his opinions unless it be in some of his dislikes that date from his youth. He consistently spoke ill of Byron, and there was a minor poet or two who had incurred his lasting contempt. But he rings all the changes in his estimate of Schiller and Goethe, curlously enough, in a reverse order. As his esteem for Schiller fails, his respect for Goethe rises. Yet he affects a sort of compulsion in his homage to the author of "Faust." If we

of his acquaintance with German literature a resident of Germany, that he was a university man at the time when it was the fashion to deery Goethe, Se shall, perhaps, have the key to his contradictory expressions. When Heine said that his early petulance at the mention of Goethe's name was due to pure envy, he stated the case for all the youth of Germany in his fused to be satisfied." time. Eeddoes seems in this case merely to have A fatal, yet almost unavoidable, defect of the caught the color of his surroundings, though where he was the same from first to last. He

almost the only kind of poetry of which I have bore on one peg, and that a bad one." The poet | gre read by few, and she satisfies herself with they must in the end be corrected. Textual of his own age will continue to be in dispute accuracy is not so important with them as But the day thus anticipated is still distant, as have given if he had published them himself. | the public with whom the writings of this charin publishing these letters will find Mr. Gosse's explanation in this volume and in his edition of

DEAN STANLEY'S LIFE.

FOR THE SERVICE OF OTHERS.

HE LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE OF ARTHUR PENRHYN STANLEY, LATE DEAN OF WESTMINSTER. By Rowland E, Prothere, M.A., Barrister-at-Law, late Fellow of All Souls' College, Oxford. With the co-operation and sanction of the Very Rev. G. S. Bradley, D. Dean of Westminster. With portraits and illustrations. Two volumes. Pp. 535-574. Charles Scribner's Sons. Scribner's Sons.

This memoir is, perhaps, somewhat too long, and yet it is to be remembered that persons who are truly interested in any particular character rarely tire of reading about it; and it is also to be observed that this narrative of the life of Dean Stanley is marked, in every part of it, with fine intelligence, deep affection and pure goodness. He lived for the service of other and the purpose of his life was the promotion of virtue. That ideal of him has been presented by his biographer, and these records of a beautiful spirit and a useful career will be read by thousands of persons all over the world, and will strengthen every reader in reverence for right and in devotion to duty. The common idea of goodness confuses it with insipidity; whereas, in | balanced epigrammatic sentences, charm.

He asks Procter, Bourne and Kelsall to pass as an unusual person, and that distinction clung upon the manuscript with a view to publication, about him till the last. Creative genius he did What they demanded, consciously has an idea-wrong, of course-as to where the portrayal of character and for the preservation feets, of their own iemptations and trials which torian, he displayed a remarkable faculty for the of memorable actions and events in the rugged strength of massive simplicity and, at the same time, with thorough fidelity of essential detail and rare loveliness of delicate color. He lived "My cursed fellows in the 'Jest Book' would amid surroundings which were always beautiful palaver immeasurably and I could not prevent and sometimes majestic, at Alderley, Norwich, Canterbury, Oxford and Westminster,-and his spirit imbibed their serenity, majesty and august repose. His Memorials of Canterbury and Westminster Abbey abound with life-like historic figures, while, for elevation of mind, gentleness of spirit, breadth of view, and charity of judgment, Becket and the Black Prince are more fully and | and addressed an audience that was waiting to they are among the noblest books of our century. clearly drawn in the Canterbury book than in beauties of Nature nor the creations of Art were tempted, he was, as has often been said, a any other historical composition. Neither the half so interesting to the mind of Stanley as types of humanity were, whether heroic or pa-

coronation of Queen Victoria, the burial of the Duke of Wellington, and the opening of the Sydenham Palace,—while, as Dean of Westminster, he was personally associated with some of the most memorable scenes in modern English history. He officiated at the burial of Dickens, Palmerston, and many worthies of his time,-not infrequently preaching their funeral sermons in the Abbey. At St. Petersburg, in 1874, he married, in a scene of prodigious magnificence, the Duke of Edinburgh and the Princess Marie of Russia. He read the service over Motley, at Kensal Green. The more important aspects of his life were, of course, his relations with essentially progressive movements in the church,-all of which he favored and helped, because he was a man of liberal mind and truly and exactly a Christian. It is, however, in his association with Westmincareer, that most American readers will consider him. Each essential portion of that career has been minutely delineated by Mr. Prothero in for Kelsali wakes the dramatist to a memory of | these two ample and handsome volumes, and has his work only to learn that everything about the been further illumined by judicious extracts

ian may be inferred from his record that, on an anniversary of the murder of Becket, he went to the scene of it, in Canterbury Cathedral, alone, at the selfsame hour when it occurred, and in the sad twilight of a December day conjured up the whole awful tragedy. His feeling for the poetic, romantic, imaginative elements of history was deep and acute, and he was able to convey them into his works and make them actual. He was a great traveller, viewing mankind, however, rather than scenery. His mental activity was incessant. He labored to make men better, and thus to extend the boundaries of rational freedom. His afflictions were the loss of his parents and his wife. These blows he feit deeply, but he bore them with patience. His influence, whether as man or writer, was helpful and cheerful, and the story of his life affords ample confirmation that he most entirely deserved the reverence and love that have followed him to his

Mrs. Coates, writing in the current "Century concerning Matthew Arnold's democracy, says that during his visit to this country "there were few things in which he manifested so eager an interest as in the conversation of our laboring men as over-heard by him from time to time. Frequently he repeated to me sentences which had reached him

would not meet with it in England.' A democrat by conviction rather than by temperament, urging democracy as 'the only method consistent with the human instinct toward expansion,' he was yet an educator, and believed in equality upon a high, not upon a low, plane. Like Ruskin, he demanded of men their best, and with less than their best re-

DR. HOLLAND.

A BRIEF NARRATIVE OF HIS CAREER.

JOSIAH GILBERT HOLLAND. By Mrs. Plunkett. With Portraits and Illustrations xt, 208. Charles Scribner's Sons.

Dr. Holland has been dead thirteen years, and this little book is the first formal record of his life. The fact is, perhaps, additional evidence I the way in which Dr. Holland's influence widened throughout his career. As a man and as an author he presented not salient and extraordinary characteristics, but a symmetry which seemed to be that of the average man. At all events, he was described as an average man, who spoke to other men almost from their own level. But the average man would find such work as Dr. Holland's well out of his reach. It does not seem far away, but he can no more capture it and make it his own than he can clutch a will-o'-the-wisp. In the long run this individual quality, whether the name of genius be denied to it or not, has something of the effect of his of genius. It preserves the work of an author will continue to be read. But she hardly waits to answer her own query in full. She observes actoristic New-Englander beiray no loss of favor. Dr. Holland touched many forms of literature. In his early work, "Gold Poil," he trenched upon a field which had been pre-empted by a famous Spaniard. But comparison between Graelan and Holland would have to go by contraries. The Spanish priest had the breeding of a Jesuit, he had the literary skill of a successful romancewriter, and he lived just at the time in the seventeenth century when style in all Western Europe had taken on what in England would be called a tinge of Euphuism. It was not a good style for telling the truth in, but it was brilliant when put to some other uses. It enabled Gracian to combine a mild cynicism with a sceming can dor, the gentleness of a dove with the cunning of a serpent in a way that was quite befitting to his profession. But for the rough and ready necessities of real life Gracian's maxims and comments were of no more use than a Damaseus blade would be for peeling potatoes. On the other hand, it was just to heat or at least to soften the hurts of real life that Dr. Holland wrote. He chose, therefore, the simplest sayings of the people, not those worthy of Reynard the taste. The essence of Stanley's character was Fox, but those suitable to honest, unsophisticated creatures. He did not aim, as Gracian had professedly done, to instruct men how to get on whether by fair means or by trickers structed them how to endure the ills of life, how to sweeten their own sorrows, how to be better rather than how to be more successful. Instead of cynical distrust, he offers the faith with which he is himself endowed. Instead of carefully the true sense of that word, goodness, of any mentary on the proveriss which he selects is like worth or consequence, implies great strength of a little sermon. He wrote, as Mrs. Plunkett character, and indeed is impossible without it. says, for the plain workaday people, who Stanley's character possessed not only moral plough and sow and reap, who spin and weave strength, but intellectual authority and personal and force, and run engines, and perform the thousand and one tasks of the household. Such In early beyhood his associates recognized him | people had no time to daily with epicurean relish ver the niceties of a brilliant and polished style. not manifest, but his talents were extraordinary, sclously, and what Dr. Holland gave them withstructed or at least reminded of their beset them in the narrow field to which their endeavor was confined, "He addressed them all," adds Mrs. Plunkeit, "on the commonest kinds of emissions and neglects, and as to phases of their lives, had he not seen them all in the wanderings and vicissitudes and deprivations of his own? When a plain farmer's seize her Saturday's paper and tear off the wrapper, saying, I must see what Timothy Titcomb says this week, before she washed her hands or looked at the marriages and deaths, we may believe that he spoke to a real want.

> preacher. The keynote of his writings was struck in his proverbial discourses. Whether in poetry or prose fiction, or editorial essay or public lecture, he meant to teach. But curiously enough he never aimed to teach people anything which they did not already know. If he had thoughts which President Lincoln's plain people had not, he kept them for the most part to himself. What he did was to make the truth that lay in people's minds a matter of conscience with them. Naturally, though perhaps needlessly, Mrs. Plunkett contrasts him with the group of writers and thinkers whom she calls the transcendentalists. The contrast is obvious enough, and yet it is needless; for on the principle that what is one man's meat is another man's poison, there was room in the world and verge enough for all the workers whether they labored for the many or the few. It is not in the temper of all to be men and women of faith, though perhaps faith-in one's self, in humanity, in Divinity-is characteristic of the ma-It was Dr. Holland's good fortune to be in harmony with the largest part of mankind here. It is hard to take scriously much that is said about the struggle with doubt of Dr. Holland in his younger days, Scepticism could only have ruffled the surface of such a nature as his. The men who are really abnormal in this aspect of their mental life, who doubt because "It is their nature to," do not escape from the Castle of Old Giant Despair so easily. In most cases, God help them, they never do escape, but groan forever in the prison of their own defects. It may be imagined that Dr. Holland would hardly have understood such men. He had no fancy for the petulant discriminations which are indispensable to the lives of certain others. There is one remark of his which seems to be the solution of the whole problem of his life. "Christianity in the form of abstract statement," said he, "and in the shape of a creed has not for me any particular interest, nor very much meaning; I have to test things through my heart and my best feelings. If they seem good and true and like Christ, it satisfies me, and nothing else does." That is broad enough to make any variation of belief possible without affecting the heart of the mat ter, the faith which was in the nature of the man. An inward peace came gradually with the fuller comprehension of himself, but it was not, according to his own statement of the case attended with any change of views. With due respect one may safely challenge the production of a line from Dr. Holland's writings which shows that he comprehended the conditions of

artificial standard of the time he may have been

remember that he was during the whole period among your working people? Upon my replying far as possible from scepticism. It marks a dif- A "STANDARD" DICTIONARY. nature of a man, and it touches vastly more

than his religion. Holland is one of the few writers, as Lowell said, who "have found the secret of drawing up and assimilating the juices of this New World of ours." Of the homelier lesson to be drawn from the struggles of an ambitious youth with dire poverty and painful adversity, and from the ample successes of later years, nothing need here be said. It ought to be as familiar to all of us as the air we breathe.

## LITERARY NOTES.

The autograph draft of a certain letter celebrated in Revolutionary annals has been discovered in the collection of the late Colonel Charles Jones, of Georgia, and is now for sale in Philadelphia. This is the epistle which Chaplain Jacob Duche, of the Continental Congress, wrote to General Washington beseeching him to lay down his arms and withdraw from the field. The moving cause of this which agitated Mr. Duche when the British soldiers appeared in Philadelphia.

are trying their pens at plays. John Oliver Hobbes | an idea that America ought to have a spelling of Some of the successful of the feminine n has been writing one in collaboration with George Moore-and a nice morbid production to be. Mrs. Clifford, the author of "Aunt Anne,"

In a letter by Robert Southey, recently sold in London, there appears an extraordinary piece of ncelt. He compares therein his own dull poem "Madoe" with Scott's "Lay of the Last Minstrel," and actually adds this peacock sentence ntinue to grow when his Turkey bean shall have withered."

Lord Wolseley is quoted as saying that to an honor of having written the most perfect description of a battle in the English language. This American is Captain Charles King, and the episode described is the cavalry fight of

translation of a literary curiosity of the eigh-

centh century, a French treatise on the folly of colished by Duprat & Co. It has an introduction number of the Groller Cub, and is entitled "Crazy Book-Collecting, or Bibliomania," neglecting her correspondent and adds this sentence,

nauseate pen, ink and paper, you would ask no As a young journalist from Ohio, Mr. Howells first visited Baston thirty-five years ago, and it is

a description of this visit that he has contributed to

the next number of "Harper's Magazine

Mr. Gladstone is finding solace under his sorrow of fading sight in translating into English verse the odes of Horace. He is so familiar with the original that this amusement gives little work to the eye.

Autograph letters of Nathan Hale, the patriot, are rare, and the few in existence have brought large sums. Messrs. Dodd & Mend's last catalogue of valuable books and MSS, contains the text of these letters, which they hold at \$1 000. It is signed and dated at New-London, Conn., in December

1774, and runs thus: the prospect of caloying. The most I now hope for that I may now and then have the satisfaction to In addition to this. I have kept dur

A careful translation into English of the first nine books of the "Historia Danica" of Saxo Grammati-cus—a storehouse of legend and romance—hasabeen made by the English scholar Oliver Elton, and will soon be published by David Nutt. It is rivations of his own. When a paint point of that this translation is intended to be wife would hurry her bread into the oven, and pointed out that this translation is intended to be wife would hurry her bread and tear off the so close and accurate that it may safely be used in Heu of the original, while at the same time the force and quality of Eaxo's style are retained. "The comment," it is added, "due to the most eminent living English specialists in Northern history, literature, and religion, aims at placing the student in possession of everything needed for a critical and scholarly use of Saxo in historical and mythological investigation." It must not be for gotten that the source of Shakespeare's "Hamlet was found in Saxo's work.

Haif the edition of this translation is to be distributed among the members of the Folk-lore So-

A new "General Natural History," edited by Richard Lydekker, is coming, in monthly parts, from the press of Frederick Warne & Co. It is to be illustrated with 1,500 drawings and seventy-two colored plates, and is to be full of anecdote as well as of accurate information,

The popularity of novels is probably nowhere so great as in Australia. It is said that ninety per cent of the female and seventy-five per cent of the male frequenters of the public libraries read novels

Garrett P. Serviss, author of "Astronomy with an Opera Glass," is preparing a volume on the use of small telescopes. It is said that Mr. Serviss will embody in this work some suggestions, not to be found elsewhere, that both amateurs and profes-

sionals will value. "It is argued," writes an English critic, "by one section of 'realists,' falsely so-called, and consist-ing of crities and imitators rather than of any great novelists, that the supreme duty of the auther is simply to set before us the facts, the realities of life, and leave us to shape our own ideals and draw our own conclusions from them, Exactly so: But to do this we must have all the facts—bad and good together. Give us unpleasant truths by all means; but show us also where ites the good which shall overcome the evil. Courage, love, endurance, pity, faithfulness, generosity-

Norwich, where Mme. Sarah Grand lived for some years, is recognized as the scene of "The Heavenly Twins." Some of the incidents mentioned in the book are reported to be founded on fact-for example, the tragedy of the lay clerk. "A few years ago," it is said by an English writer, "a well known and popular tenor, after hiding for a day or two in the clerestory of Norwich Cathedral, committed suicide by hanging himself there. Naturally a profound sensation resulted. There was talk of the cathedral being reconstructed, but in the end a solemn service of humiliation and reconciliation

MRS. BLAINE'S LIFE OF HER HUSBAND.

Mrs. Blaine is working steadily upon the life of her husband. The family have been living very quietly in the famous old red house on Lafayette Square this winter, and all of them have been doing literary work. Mrs. Blaine is to do more than to collect the material for Gail Hamilton to write. Mrs. Blaine is a literary woman herself, and the two women will collaborate. The son and the daughter are helping to get up the material, although Miss Blaine will soon be called away from her literary duties to get married to Mr. Truxton Beale. a heretic-he was so called-but heresy is as

ITS SPELLINGS, ITS VOCABULARY, ITS DEFINITIONS AND THEIR UNSCIEN-TIFIC METHOD; ITS DEFERENCE TO THE AVERAGE MAN, ITS

GENERAL MERITS. London, March 27. The English have given a friendly welcome to the Standard Dictionary of the Funk & Wag- the editors, "the most common meaning has been nalls Company of New-York. The welcome is given first; that is, preference is given to the friendly notwithstanding the American origin of order of usage over the historical order." the book. It is civil notwithstanding the abom- con nience of the "average man" has been coninable spelling to which I for one will never apply the adjective American. I have always determine the order of usage; "the most obvious maintained that it represented a phase, and a or important current meaning?" The editor must very imperfect and melancholy one, in American | determine it. That is to say, he is to choose out development or American scholarship. It was of a multitude of usages and significations the an accident. Webster, to whom it is mainly due, came at a time when there was none too age man; the one which the average man will much sound learning, and when that appetite for mere novelty, which is one mark of sciolism, prevailed. A spirit of protest against what is accepted is another mark of the same thing; of | judgment on this point in conflict with the effprotest for protest's sake. Perhaps a spirit of pseudo-patriotism had something to do with it;

her own as well as a literature of her own. Noah Webster impersonated all these intellectual eccentricities. He was not a scholar, not | whole world of lexicography, lay ready to his a sound or learned philologist. He was an empirical lexicographer. He had the courage of his absurdities, and did not shrink from stereotyping any other ground than that of a concession to them in a dictionary. Later, his dictionary was improved by Goodrich, and later still by Porter and the German, Mahn. That was what patriotism in orthography came to; we went to a Berlin professor to be taught American. The goodness of this last revised Webster, in which there was not much left of Webster as he first presented | convenience. himself to the public, gave a fresh vogue to his ineptitudes in the spelling of certain words. The all dictionaries are useful,-all lists of words an spelling got a foothold in printing and publishing useful-and the "Standard" is useful. It has offices; perhaps in newspaper offices most readily of all. It caught on in the West. Chicago re- profits by the accumulations of its predecessors. celved it with rapture, and Arkansas thought it. It profits by the unquestionable ability and ina new revelation. It became a kind of vested | dustry of its makers, both of which must be eri-

scholars to contend against. another followed servilely at the heels of Web- cographer is to the encyclopaedic, and this ster. When the Century Dictionary was planned dictionary abounds in information of the encycloor the first time in "Poet Lore," she apologizes for by its spirited projectors there was a good paedic kind. That again will recommend it to chance for a successful revolt. They had cour- the average man. In matters which are more which many authors have echoed in spirit: "If, dear | age and money. They could well have afforded | strictly lexicographical-etymologies, definitions, th I do write, and how I to risk something, and to strike a new note or return to the old. But they were budly advised. I don't know whether it was Professor Whit- fully. It is printed with admirable clearness on ney or another who took the decision about good paper from well cut type and in black ink. spelling, and resolved that the rut had grown | These are no light medits in a book meant to be too deep to lift the wheel out of. Profersor Whit- consulted quickly. The adoption of the patented ney was, in any case, Professor of Sanskrit, not of spelling. He knew a great deal of Sanskrit; bee-hive indentations, is a mistake. It is neither perhaps more Sanskrit than English. At any rate, the chance was missed. Then, perhaps, more strongly than ever be-

fore, the idea had rooted itself in the American mind that to spell traveller with two I's implied a preference for foreign lands and an imperfect affection of your own. Same millions of budding American Presidents, from seven to seventy years of age, held it to be what the lrate Mr. Brander Matthews calls a "Briticism," Mr. Brander Matthews is perhaps the most accomplished living specimen of the Anglophobe, and he has, I hear, pupils and readers, and authority in these critical one, and many others are critical, but matters. Very different men held notions not less perverse than his. Mr. Blaine held them. to the merit of the Standard Dictionary as He maintained in all seriousness that the majority ought to rule. "Why," he asked, "should authority on all points would be absurd. It is sixty millions of people allow thirty-five millions sufficient if they recognize its general utility, to spell for them?" I used to ask him whether Criticism, whether general or special, does not he would apply this canon of pure democracy to all questions of scholarship; whether he would might be trusted to discover that this is preagree that two and two make five if the sixty millions said so? But he was obdurate; -- so obdurate that it seemed to be an open question whether he would not have a plebiscite in the United States to determine whether Joel Barlow or Homer had the truest notion of what an epic poem ought to be like.

In this matter of spelling, the editors of the Standard Dictionary have followed as meekly in the footsteps of the "Century" as the "Century" in Webster's. They give, indeed, alternative spellings, as the "Century" did, and as the revised Webster did. But alternatives are for the curious. Nineteen out of twenty who go to a dicfor information take the first spelling

It may be a knowledge of that peculiarity of human nature which led the editors of the Standard to resolve on giving first that definition of a word which represents its most frequent usage. The practice is not scientific; it is not usual, it may often mislead, it is vexing to the stinlent, but it may well enough be popular. There are various other points in which popularity seems to have been the main object of the compilers of this dictionary. There need be no objection to a reasonable compliance with popular wishes in a work meant, before all things,

to be popular and to secure a great sale, The selection of words affords another illustration. Selection is perhaps not an accurate expression for the method adopted. Collection would come nearer. Has anything been excluded? Is anything too colloquial or too familiar, or within the limits of decency, too vulgar, for admission? It is thought necessary that each new competitor for the public favor shall be able to say that he gives more words than his predecessor. No doubt, the Standard has, in this particular, beat the record. The "International" Webster has 125,000 words; the "Century" 225,000; the Standard 280,000, or more. The editor never theless, tells us in his practice that the need for the exercise of a discriminating judgment has been clearly recognized, and he quotes, with considerable courage, Mr. Lovell's characteristic protest against the ominum gatherum method. I will take leave to quote it again:

"A dictionary that should embrace every unusual word, every new compound, every metaphorical turn of meaning to be found in our great writers, would be a compendium of the genius of our authors rather than of our language; and a lexicographer who rakes the second and third-rate men for out-of-the-way phrases is doing us no favor. A dictionary is not a dragnet to bring up for us the broken pots and dead kittens, the sewerage of speech as well as its living fishes. Nor do we think it a fair test of such a work that one should seek in it for every odd word that may have tickled his fancy in a favorite author."

I do not doubt that the editor quoted this in good faith, yet there are not many pages of his vocabulary which do not violate Mr. Lowell's canons; not many in which there is not a trickle of what Mr. Lowell calls sewerage. Still, an error on the side of inclusion, in the case of words which have a historical place in the language, is venial. Not so the wholesale inclusion of scientific terms. The editor framed for himself and his colleagues certain rules which he calls Rules of Exclusion. They might better be called Rules of Inclusion. He admits that he has recorded about 4,000 terms referring to electricity or to its multifarious applications He gives the names of all accepted orders of flowering plants, all the most important genera, botanical and zoological, and all the various meanings or shades of meaning of words as used by reputable geologists of the past or present. The proper place for most of these is surely a special lexicon, not a general dictionary. But if the bulk of these had been excluded the boast that the number of words in the "Standard" exceeds so largely the number in other dictionaries might have been difficult to make good. "The Century" was a great offender in the same way. The broad pages of its six huge quarto volumes overflow with scientific terms which belong in a scientific dictionary and nowhere else. They are of use to specialists. They are not, as a

rule, of use to the general public. The general public, nevertheless, takes a lenient

view of errors of surplusage. It may probe take an equally lenient view of the on error of method which has obviously been adopted in deference to its supposed wishes,-I mean the order of definition, to which I referred above The judgment of the editors who resolved on the order is entitled to respect, but they seem to stand alone. I have seen no review, and no expression of personal opinion among the many quoted from competent sources, which approves this peculiar, ity, "If a word has two or more meanings," say sulted, or is meant to be consulted. Who is to one which is, in his judgment, that of the averlook for first when he consults this dictionary. He cannot do it, and he has not done it. Turn to what page you like, and you will find your He is probably more often right than wrong, but the percentage of error is so large as to prove the essential fault of the method. It is the deliberate adoption of an empirical method when the scientific method, sanctioned by the hand. He would not deny that it is unscientific confusing, misleading and totally indefensible on demand which he thinks popular or general, and which almost everybody else thinks imaginary, It cannot be that the dictionary-using portion of the American public is in too great a hurry to choose for itself the definition it wants, or desires

Well, no dictionary is free from error, and the great advantage of being the latest, R interest, and interest too powerful, perhaps, for | dent to every student, and even to that "average man" for whom such needless sacrifices have Thus was it that one dictionary-maker after been made. The tendency of the modern lexito justify its name, and often strives successindex, with its marginal letters and queer little convenient nor sightly. But as I began with the unfulfilled intention of giving a brief account of English opinion, I will end with the ending sentence of a long review in "The Chronicie," which is no mean authority:

the right order of things to be reversed for the

"The Standard is most creditable to American enterprise and scholarship, and it will take an honored and useful place on a handy shelf by the busy man's desk. It is a distinctive and independent work, and will be frankly welcomed in England, as well as in America.

The notice from which that is an extract is a that only enhances the value of their testimony whole. To say that scholars will accept its call its utility in question, and if it did the public

THE WELLERS.

WHERE DICKENS FOUND THEIR PROTO-TYPES.

From The London Globe. It is surprising how little fear of the law of libel ouckens had before his eyes. From the recent correspondence in "The Athenaeum" on the subject of his Yorkshire visit, it is clear that he started with the intention of investigating the condition of certain schools which had any little or certain schools which had a supplied to the law of libel or continued to t

features in Dotheboys Hall. The statement of correspondent that the publication of "Nicholar Nickleby" led to the breaking up of that school, and to the ruin of the schoolmaster, remains uncontradicted. After this exploit, the nevelist's use of the name of Mr. Humphrey or Humphrys, the clockmaker, of Barnard Castle, whose acquaintance he made in the smoking-room of the King's Arms, and in whose company he visited the Bowes school was a mittler and less dangerous enterprise. But it is a further illustration of his audacity in laying on local color.

His prour se, indeed, was like the enchanted she did behold how over that same door was like wise writ. The bold, be bold, and every where is she did behold how over that same door was likewise writ. The bold, be bold, and every where is bold. In the West, as in the North, Dickens with an little heetlation in Someon was likewise with an little heetlation in Someon and with the conservation of the construction of the constr